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you as an example to the village, and made much of you and yours; and good cause I have had for doing so. Speak the truth now—are you going to break my heart? Though the Lord knows it is well nigh broken already?"

Poor Tom struggled hard for utterance, being almost choked by his emotions. He saw, too, that the priest was greatly agitated.

"Father M.," said he at last, slowly, and solemnly, "have I ever yet, knowingly, said or done anything to displease you. Have not I and mine, man and boy, wife and child, always loved you and looked up to you?"

"You have so done, always and truly," was the reply. "Is it likely now, Father," said Tom, drawing near, and speaking out of his full heart; "is it likely that I would now bring sin and shame to my own door, and on my father's house, by bringing sorrow upon you, if I could help it. Do you believe I would, Father M.?"

"I do not," said the hearer.

"You were always kind and good to all. You never said a hard word, or did a hard thing. And much as it will grieve you to hear, it grieves me more to say, what I well know will be sore sorrow to you, but—its best out"—It was a great trial, and Tom's breath came thick and choking, as dropping out his words, one by one, he said—"I cannot remain any longer in the Catholic Church!"

The priest did not utter a syllable for a moment. He was very pale, and as Tom watched him in silent agony, his lips moved as though he were praying. At last he said—

"Have you well considered the consequences of this fearful determination?"

"Yes, Father, long, and well. I have fought against it, I have wrestled with it, I have done what man could do to force it from me. By night and by day it has been haunting me. But all to no use. I could not get rid of it, I fought against it Father M., because I dreaded more to grieve and offend you than I did to make God angry by resisting his will."

"What has led you to this change?" said Father M.

Tom told him all. Frankly and fully did he pour out of his heart before him. Step by step he laid before his hearer, who seemed to drink in every word he uttered, the progress and the pain of the strife in his mind. The strong energy of his language; the unmistakable evidences of his thorough sincerity; the simplicity and the power of the reasons which he adduced as the causes of his change; and, above all, the touching traits of his strong affection for the priest himself, which ran like a thread of gold through all he uttered, amazed and subdued his listener, who, overcome by his emotion, buried his face in his hands, as the earnest man, in the strong rush of his feelings, drew near, and laying his hand, with the lightness of a child's touch, upon the priest's shoulder, spoke, as though moved by its influence, of the power of the truth which had overmastered him, and besought the priest to pardon the grief which he had occasioned him.

Father M. was deeply affected. It was not strange that, in the extreme surprise of the moment, there should have flashed over his soul the wondering question—"Whence hath this man all these things?" as he listened in amazement to the untutored man, pouring forth from the unsealed fountains of his heart words of unwonted eloquence. Shaking off, after a moment's silence, the strange feeling which he experienced, he said—

"You may leave me for the present. We shall speak again on the subject."

"Not," said Tom, "until you have given me your blessing. I never valued it so much as I do now."

"You have it, my son," said the priest. "The blessing that is better than mine be with you."

Tom left with a relieved and a joyous heart. He had not, however, gone far before he was summoned to a meeting of a very different kind.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

To diminish the chance of disappointment, all letters should be forwarded to the office by the first day of the month. All letters to be addressed to the Editor, 9, Upper Sackville-street. Contributors of £1 per annum will be furnished with six copies, any of which will be forwarded, as directed, to nominees of the subscriber.

The CATHOLIC LAYMAN is registered for transmission beyond the United Kingdom.

The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, NOVEMBER 15, 1856.

It is not long since we have seen the kingdom of Belgium described in a leading Roman Catholic publication as the Paradise of the Church, and it is usually adduced by those who would deny the contrast between Roman Catholic and Protestant countries in agricultural or commercial prosperity, as a striking proof of how compatible the religion of Rome is with free institutions and the fullest development of the indus-

trial resources of a country entirely under its sway.

Some recent disclosures have, however, taken place, which seem to denote that however powerful the Church of Rome may, externally, appear to be in Belgium, there has been an undercurrent long, though, perhaps, invisibly, undermining her foundations, and which has at last swollen to such formidable dimensions that the ecclesiastical authorities have found it necessary—whether wisely or not remains to be proved—to put forth their utmost strength, and yet are obliged to admit their total want of power to avert the evil they deplore.

There are three public universities in Belgium—those of Brussels and Ghent, supported and encouraged by the State, and that of Louvain, exclusively under the control of the bishops and ecclesiastics of the Church of Rome.

We have now before us two remarkable documents, the one a pastoral letter of the Bishop of Bruges, in which he denounces the University of Brussels as a seat of impiety, in which all Catholic verities are openly attacked, and where the effects of the teaching of the Catholic University of Louvain are nullified; the other a speech delivered by M. Verhaegen, the chief inspector, at the opening of the session, in the College Hall of the University of Brussels, on the 6th of October last, before a numerous assemblage of literary and scientific personages, as well as the professors and students of the University, under the presidency of M. Charles de Brouckere, the Burgomaster of the city.

Without pretending to decide whether the bishops or the professors have the best reason to complain of the other, we shall give extracts from each of their manifestoes, by which our readers will be able to form their own opinion of the present position of the Church of Rome in its Belgian "paradise."

The pastoral letter of Mgr. Malon, Bishop of Bruges, which appeared in full in the *Journal des Debats* of 30th September last, commences by a lamentation over the anti-Catholic tendencies which for some years have manifested themselves in the University of Ghent, and which dangers, he says, had so alarmed his venerable colleagues, the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines and the Bishops of Tournay and Ghent, that they had called the attention of the Sovereign Pontiff to the subject, and received from his Holiness a brief, addressed to the Bishop of Ghent, in which he praises in the highest manner the measures he and the Bishops of Tournay and Bruges had taken, by exhorting the clergy to caution parents against the very grave dangers to which their sons were exposed in the University of Ghent, and urges them to redouble their attention, care, and exertion, and to employ *all* means to prevent the ravages which this frightful plague (*peste effroyable*) might produce in their flocks.

It was, doubtless, no slight movement towards asserting its freedom by the University of Ghent which could give rise to so public an admission of the dangers to be apprehended from it, from such high ecclesiastical authorities as the Cardinal Archbishop of Malines, the Bishops of Ghent, Bruges, and Tournay, and ultimately from the Pope himself.

The Bishop of Bruges proceeds to denounce, on similar grounds, the University of Brussels. "A state of things," he adds, "which we deplore, but unhappily have not the power to remedy, as the attractions of the capital, and the facility of obtaining considerable pecuniary rewards (*bourses d'étude*), drawn from the public treasury, too often lead youths there who have come out of ecclesiastical seminaries, brought up with those Christian sentiments which every father of a Catholic family would wish to see inculcated in his children."

"It is a long time since the free University of Brussels

has raised the standard of impiety. It makes no mystery either of its principles or its object; to attack Catholic belief, to propagate what they call the religion of honest men, and nullify the effects of the instruction given at the Catholic University of Louvain; to oppose itself in every manner possible to the influence of the religious principle: such is the action of the University of Brussels, and such is the creed which its founders have proposed to themselves. This establishment is, as every one now knows, the emanation of a secret society. Things have come to the point where no Christian can take a part in this work without falling into a species of apostasy."

The Bishop then refers to the Archbishop of Malines having already deplored, in energetic terms, the evils referred to, and quotes the following passage from the Cardinal's manifesto, in which he says his Eminence adds with a sentiment of profound grief—

"There are among you, my dear brethren, perverse or perverted men (*des hommes pervers*), who have concerted a plan of arresting, if it were possible, the religious progress which manifests itself among you. . . . They abuse the liberty of the press to calumniate the civilizing agency of the clergy, wishing their readers to believe that it is from self-interest, or the spirit of domination; and the desire to trample upon the rights of civil authority, that the priests occupy themselves with the education of youth. . . . By the admission of the founders themselves, they have established in the capital of that kingdom a course of superior instruction, with the express object of teaching religious doctrines opposed to those of the Catholic University founded by the Episcopacy, &c."

The Bishop next proceeds to denounce the University of Ghent—

"There is another establishment, that, from the protection it enjoys from the government, ought to inspire less distrust in parents, and which, by the enormous sums of which it has the disposal, may attract a larger number of pupils within its bosom, which presents equal dangers at the present day, to Catholic families, with the free University of Brussels. I speak of the University of Ghent."

"This danger must have been very great to have aroused the solicitude of the four Belgian bishops whose dioceses are exposed to the ruinous influences of the anti-Catholic teaching of this University, and to have provoked such a positive declaration from the Apostolic Holy See as that which we have just published. The fathers of Catholic families will, without doubt, very willingly submit themselves, in a matter so evidently religious, to judges so competent. Nevertheless, the Bishop of Ghent, to throw more publicity on the matter, in the pastoral letter which he has just published on the instruction and education of youth, points out the deplorable errors, the formal heresies, which the professors of the University of Ghent have taught their pupils, as the last results of science. These gentlemen have denied the divine institution of our mother the Church. They represent it, says the Bishop of Ghent, as a human institution—as the production of fortunate circumstances—as the invention of the Roman Pontiffs. These same Pontiffs, the successors of St. Peter and vicars of Jesus Christ, have been, according to the teaching of one of these professors, nothing but usurpers, the oppressors of the human race during the whole of the middle ages—that is to say, during eleven centuries—in such a manner that Luther, Zuingli, Calvin, and the other chiefs of the Reformation of the sixteenth century, came to free the human mind from the shameful yoke under which it groaned."

The pastoral then proceeds, we know not whether justly or not, to accuse another professor of denying the doctrine of original sin, and a third that of the divinity of our blessed Lord, and of introducing a puerile distinction between what is true philosophically and true religiously. We shall be glad to learn that those latter statements are untrue, though one extreme too often, we know, leads men into another; and it would not be the first time that men, in escaping from the dogmas of a blind and implicit credulity, have been seduced from the true middle path of safety and moderation into the abyss of unbelief or utter scepticism. We have always, indeed, considered its tendency to lead intellectual men into infidelity, as one of the most dangerous and sad characters of the Church of Rome. It is too often with the human mind as with the eye long accustomed to the darkness of a prison on its first emerging into the broad sunshine—it is blinded for a time by the sudden and unaccustomed blaze, and requires time and experience

to see anything in its just colours and proportions. As well, however, might it be argued that the human eye cannot endure the light of the sun, because the immured prisoner is blinded by its rays, as to argue that the reason of mankind should never be emancipated from mental slavery, because its sudden disenthralment occasionally has led it into error or excess. Let it ever be recollected it was not the light of the sun, but the long exclusion from it, which deranged the eye and destroyed its powers.

Let not our readers, therefore, hastily or unheard condemn the professors of either Ghent or Brussels. Even the pastoral of the Bishop of Bruges admits them to be "persons deserving of respect, men of mind and talent, whose conversion to the Catholic faith he most ardently desires;" and we cannot help hoping either that their opinions have been misrepresented or exaggerated, or that they may, after a little further study and experience, be able to distinguish and disentangle the elements of truth which still exist in the Church of Rome, inherited from the Catholic Church in its original purity, from the distortions and corruptions which for many centuries have disfigured and disguised it.

Let us now hear M. Verhaegen, who, himself a Roman Catholic, holding a station of high authority in the University of Brussels, thus addressed the assemblage we have already referred to at the opening of the session upon the 6th Oct., ult. After congratulating the professors on the progressive success of the University, he thus proceeded:—

"But the demon of religious intolerance, with a lie in its mouth, and with hatred in its heart, has again appeared amongst us. It calls us, who will not submit to its tyranny, perverted in our ways (des hommes pervers), accuses us of being freemasons, covering our iniquities with mysterious secrecy, and prohibits parents to place their children under our guidance and tuition. Twenty-five years ago, in 1830, the Roman priest shook us by the hand and said, 'There shall be no more religious dissension; diversity of opinion shall be respected, and worship of every denomination tolerated; public instruction shall be unshackled, and the liberty of the press be free as air.' It was a solemn compact betwixt the teacher of knowledge and the teacher of faith. Then came, in angry defiance, the encyclical letter of Rome in 1832. It proclaimed the liberty of conscience and of worship, registered in the constitutional pact, to be a maxim false, absurd, and extravagantly sinful; that the liberty of the press was pernicious and to be held in horror (cette liberté est funeste, on ne saurait avoir trop d'horreur); and that the liberty of speech and debate was inimical to the peace of the Holy See. In fact, the encyclical letter of Pope Gregory condemned the very essential principles of the constitution. From that moment the Roman bishops became the enemies of Belgian liberty. They had to choose betwixt the duty towards their King and country and their allegiance to the Pope. Their selection was not doubtful. They violated their engagement to the constitution of 1830, and ever since have been endeavouring to create a reaction in favour of absolutism, in order to place Belgium under the protection, the tolerance, the security, the well-being, the benevolence, and the happiness of the Roman States (loud and ironical cheering). It was the practice formerly to stop opinion by putting the opinionists to death, and therefore the rack of Innocent III., the axe of Philip II., and the arquebus of Charles IX. were called into requisition. Public opinion, fashioned by philosophy and morality, arrested the cruel tyranny of popes and kings; and the progress of instruction, in teaching the true principles of social virtue, has developed the human intellect, and led to civilisation. It is against the one and the other that the Roman priest is at war. The Roman Church no longer contents itself with the province of teaching religion; it assumes to be the irresponsible arbiter of right or wrong, in hostility to national government. It is more than a religion—it is a political institution in conflict with the State, and bases its ideal of social perfection upon the theocratic absolutism of Rome. (C'est que l'Eglise Romaine n'est pas seulement une religion, mais un parti politique, un parti qui marche à l'assaut de l'Etat, et qui voit l'ideal de la société humaine dans l'absolutisme théocratique de Rome.) The Bishops of Ghent and Bruges, in their pastorals, deny the right of liberty of conscience, liberty of instruction, liberty of speech, liberty of worship, and the liberty of the press; and this political faith, published and proclaimed by the Pope in 1832, has never been annulled. It must, therefore, be considered as a Papal injunction—serious, final, and obligatory upon the faithful, at least in Belgium (nous devons donc la considérer comme éternelle, définitive et obligatoire pour les fidèles, du moins en Belgique). This explains the present conduct of the clergy, and this never changes; for the history of the past

is the history of the future. Between obedience to the Pope and respect for the constitution they will not hesitate, and they have not hesitated. We know what we have to expect: history explains that. It is said that the Roman Church dare not push matters to extremity; but what may not be done openly may be done secretly, and a covert attack under the fostering wing of Rome may effect the object for which the priests now are plotting. It is in this light that the pastoral letters of the Bishops of Ghent and Bruges must be regarded. They are the result of a league betwixt the bishops and clergy against the fundamental charter of Belgium, and menace both our tranquillity from within and our independence from without (Les évêques et le clergé Belge forment une ligue contre notre pacte fondamental, et ils menacent notre tranquillité intérieure et notre indépendance au dehors.) We Belgians have shown ourselves capable of appreciating and understanding the value of liberty and self-government. Under the guidance of an upright and just king (sage et loyal) we have enjoyed for twenty-five years the rights of conscience, the liberty of speech, and the liberty of the press, even when neighbouring kingdoms, more powerful but less sensible, have failed to preserve similar advantages. As we won these liberties, so will we maintain them; giving to religion faithfully its due, and keeping the Romish priest aloof from the exclusive tuition of your youth."

This remarkable speech, delivered by a Roman Catholic authority before the "notables" of Brussels, and the professors and students of the University, under the presidency of M. Charles de Brouckere, was cheered vociferously from beginning to end.

We have also learned that an equally determined resistance as that at Brussels to the Jesuit and ultramontane party, of which the Bishops of Ghent and Bruges are the avowed leaders, has since been exhibited at Ghent at a banquet given to M. Manilius, the liberal candidate at the late election. M. Verhaegen, the deputy of Brussels, in giving the toast, "A union of the liberal provinces," pointed out the imminent danger of this movement of the clergy against the constitution. In the course of his address he observed—

"That to be a liberal in the true signification of the word was to be a conservative; and that the first duty of loyalty was to preserve the integrity of the constitution against any inroad, be it republican, or be it clerical and absolutist. On the 14th of June, 1846, a congress of liberals was held in the Hotel de Ville at Brussels. M. de Facqz, the president of the assembly, in a speech even now well remembered, made clear the necessity of organising an opposition to the encroachments of the clergy (il démontra la nécessité d'une forte organisation afin de mettre un terme aux empiétements du clergé). The liberal associations of that day, opened and determined, and instituted for the preservation of the constitution, bravely triumphed. Those provincial committees have been formally dissolved; they exist still, and only require to be again put into active operation for the same cause and with the same success. The time of concession is past. As in 1847, the liberal party must be up and doing. It was then that the cause of the King and Constitution was saved by Flanders, and Flanders will a second time raise its voice and defend the country. Inaccessible to fear, confident in the righteousness of their cause, and resolute of purpose, the Flemish patriots well know who are their foes and how they must be treated. The policy of conciliation and moderation must be abandoned, since it has been preached by the clergy only to dupe the loyal and unsuspecting. That is a game never played twice. (On ne transige pas deux fois sur le même sujet.) We will now exact the most rigid obedience to the letter of the law and the constitution. Je bois, messieurs, aux Flandres, et à l'union des libéraux dans toutes les provinces."

In obedience to this advice the old associations are again brought into play, and are being actively organised throughout the provinces, to oppose the clerical pretensions put forth in the pastoral of the Bishop of Bruges.

We understand that a missive has arrived from the Pope, conveying serious censure upon the Bishops of Ghent and Brussels for having injured the cause of Rome by their aforesaid pastorals. We have not seen the document, nor is it likely that it has been fully made public; but we can well believe the assertion, that while allowing the bishops credit for their zeal, the Holy Father recommends for the future a somewhat less open and ingenuous course of proceeding, though one not less favourable to success.

Be this as it may, Belgium and its free universities, aided by the liberal associations already referred to, bid fair to render that happy and

prosperous country about as little of a paradise for the hierarchy of Rome as Piedmont or Sardinia.

The world is beginning to wake from its lethargy—will our beloved island slumber on still?

THE INQUISITION AGAIN.

OUR readers may be desirous of knowing how far the Inquisition is still in operation in the Pope's territories in Italy, and it so happens that since our account of Carnesecchi was in type we have met with the following document taken from an Italian newspaper. Our readers, as they peruse it, will observe how like it is in many points to the charges against Carnesecchi:—

"The *Correspondance Italienne* of the 13th October publishes the following curious document, bearing the signature of the Inquisitor-General, with the observation that comment upon it is needless:—

"EDICT OF THE HOLY OFFICE.

"We, F. R. Thomas Vincent Airdali, of the Order of Preachers, Master of Sacred Theology, and in the towns and dioceses of Ancona, Osimo-Cignoli, Jesi, Senigallia, Loreto and Recanati, Macerata and Talantino, and other lands and localities annexed, Inquisitor-General of the Holy Apostolic See, especially appointed against heretical depravity;

"Being desirous, as imposed by our holy office, that the Catholic faith (without which, as the Apostle Paul writes to the Jews, it is impossible to please God) should be in our jurisdiction maintained pure and immaculate from all heretical contagion; and experience having proven to us that many persons from malice, others from disobedience, and, finally, others from ignorance, do not fulfil the strict obligation they are under of denouncing to the Holy Office the misdeeds which come under its attributions, and that serious inconveniences and errors result therefrom, not only against good morals, but especially against the Catholic faith; nevertheless we, who have specially at heart the glory of God, the full conservation and increase of the holy faith, and the salvation of souls, to obviate all disorder, with the apostolic authority entrusted to us, command, in virtue of holy obedience, and under pain of excommunication, without prejudice to other penalties prescribed by the sacred canons, decrees, constitutions, and bulls of the Sovereign Pontiffs, by this present edict, all and every person, whatever his station, rank, or employment, whether lay or clerical, and without the delay of one month, ten days of which are assigned for the first, ten for the second, and ten for the third peremptory term, to inform against and notify to us judicially, or to our vicars or resident curates, all and each of such persons as may come under his or their acquaintance;

"Who are heretical, or suspected of being so, or harbourers or supporters of heretics, or who may have adhered to or do adhere to Jewish, or Mahomedan, or Pagan rites, or who have become apostates from the true Catholic faith;

"Who may have committed acts from which sufficient proof might be deduced that they are in open or secret league with the devil, performing acts of sorcery, of magic, necromancy, offering to the above-named (sic) perfumes, incense, or prayers for the discovery of treasures or other unholy purposes; by invocations or promises of obedience, or by other practices in which his name or others are invoked;

"Who are familiar with or who practise necromancy, or no matter what sort of magic, with the abuse of the sacraments, sacred or hallowed things;

"Who, not being ordained, should have usurped with sacrilegious temerity the right of performing mass, or who are suspected of administering the sacrament of penitence to the faithful of Jesus Christ;

"Who may have abused or do abuse the sacrament of penitence, or the locality (*luogo*) of the same against the apostolic decrees;

"Who may have held or who hold secret meetings, in contempt and to the prejudice of, or against, the Catholic religion;

"Who may have uttered or utter heretical blasphemies against God Almighty, the most Holy Virgin Mary, and the saints, or who may have or do express contempt for sacred images;

"Who, despite of a solemn oath in the profession of no matter what religion approved by the Church, or after having taken holy orders, may have or do contract or try to contract a marriage;

"Who during the lifetime of a first wife take a second, or who, during the lifetime of a first husband, take or try to take a second;

"Who may have, or have endeavoured to impede, no matter how, the functions of the Holy Inquisition; or who, no matter how, may have acted contrary to the bull of his Holiness Pius V. of blessed memory, which commences as follows:—"*Si de protendis*,"

"Who may have published satires against the Sovereign Pontiff, the Sacred College, high church functionaries of established religious orders; or who may have published writings, no matter how, containing abuse or profanation of Holy Writ;

"Who, without the regular permission, should have in their possession writings or prints containing heresy or heretical works of an irreligious nature; or who read such, print such, or allow such to be printed; or who introduce them or circulate them under no matter what pretext or motive;

"Who may have, without reason or permission, eaten, or given to eat to others, meat, eggs, or milk, on prohibited days, in contempt of the precepts of the Holy Church;

"Who may have induced a Christian to embrace Judaism or any other sect contrary to the holy Catholic religion, or who may have prevented, no matter how, Jews or Turks from being baptised.

"It is declared that by this statement of cases, specified by us, as of a nature to be denounced by the Holy Office, other cases are not excluded which come under the sacred canons, decrees, constitutions, and bulls of the Sovereign Pontiffs.